

Mandel leaves with 'no regrets'

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Annapolis—Marvin Mandel savored a sip of champagne and a kiss on the cheek as the power of the governor's office slipped invisibly away from him yesterday at the stroke of noon.

Virtually isolated from the throng of well-wishers who had converged on the state Capitol for the inauguration of Harry R. Hughes, Mr. Mandel sat in a corner of the penthouse restaurant at the Annapolis Hilton Hotel, accompanied by his wife, Jeanne; his daughter, Ellen; his sister-in-law, Virginia Duke, and three reporters.

Two state troopers, his official security guards until noon, represented the only remaining trappings of the office that he had assumed 10 years and 10 days ago.

"Ten years and 10 days," he recalled, ignoring the 15 months and 10 days during which he had been suspended from office after his conviction and sentencing on corruption charges. No one asked him about that. The conviction was overturned last week.

After a false start with a bottle of champagne that turned out to be flat, the sparkling wine from a second bottle was poured.

"La-chiam," a member of the group said, offering the traditional Hebrew wish for good luck. The Governor warmed to the expression, clinking glasses with his wife, who kissed him on the cheek.

"I think I've been lucky all the way," Mr. Mandel said. "I don't have any regrets."

He shrugged off his ostracism from the ceremonies at the State House up the hill from where he sat.

Harry Hughes, he said, "is entitled to all the pleasures. I've had them and I know what it means to him. It's his day and I don't want to disrupt it."

Then, turning to reminiscence, Mr. Mandel observed, "There's no other office like the governor's office."

"When I left the legislature to become governor," he said, "I thought I knew everything. But when I got up there I found that . . . as much as you think you've learned, it's an entirely different position."

The outgoing governor, who resumed



Former Governor Mandel and his wife, Jeanne, raise their glasses in champagne toast.

power Monday afternoon after the United States Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals had set aside his conviction, spent the earlier part of his last hours as governor in his office, collecting mail and answering telephone calls.

After an hour and a half, he left the office about 10.45 A.M., walking quickly down the imposing marble steps that lead from the second floor of the State House to the ornate first floor, which was already filling up with people who had come to witness the Hughes inauguration.

Holding hands, Mr. and Mrs. Mandel emerged practically unnoticed from the east portico of the State House and headed across State Circle, where Mrs. Mandel abruptly paused in the middle of the

road to look back at the State House dome.

"I was saying good-by to it all," she said later. "I was saying good-by to all those wonderful people."

The Mandels said they would continue to live in the Anne Arundel county home they have occupied since they went into forced exile from the Governor's Mansion at the time of his sentencing and suspension from office. He said he expects to resume the law practice he abandoned years ago.

And, for the first time since they were married less than five years ago, Mrs. Mandel observed, "We'll be alone. We haven't even been alone in a car."

"I haven't even driven a car in 10 years," the Governor realized.